

guardians, and 5 by recruited families. The center also assisted more than 900 juvenile delinquents through counseling, mentoring and reintegration services. The center had operating revenues of approximately \$12 million in 2002, and over 85 cents of every dollar received was spent on program services. Currently the center employs 200 people.

The center was founded in Flint, Michigan, in 1978. The founder is child advocate Robert E. Ennis. Mr. Ennis started the center with \$6,000, which he borrowed from a friend, and a responsibility to 33 foster children. Today the center is operating in four locations, 20100 Greenfield Rd., Detroit; 2921 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit; 3650 Dixie Highway, Waterford; and 129 E. Third Avenue, Flint, Michigan. Ennis Center for Children has been noted as one of Michigan's largest minority-led non-profit organizations of its kind.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, I ask that my colleagues in the 108th Congress join me in recognizing Ennis Center for Children on their 25th anniversary for dedication and service to the children and families of Southeast Michigan.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HOLOCAUST VICTIMS INSURANCE FAIRNESS ACT

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to introduce the "Holocaust Victims Insurance Fairness Act"—legislation to provide states with the authority to assist survivors of the Holocaust.

Before and during the Holocaust, millions of European Jews purchased life insurance policies with certain European insurance companies as a form of savings and investment for the future. After World War II, however, insurance companies rejected many claims presented by Holocaust survivors or heirs of Holocaust victims because the claimants lacked the requisite documentation such as death certificates that had been confiscated by the Nazi regime.

Some families have tried for years to obtain promised benefits, but insurance companies continue to demand that the survivors produce non-existent documents. In 1998, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) was established to address the issue of unpaid insurance policies and to expedite payouts to Holocaust victims.

ICHEIC has received over 90,000 claims, but has only made a few thousand settlement offers. This shortfall has forced disillusioned claimants to turn to the states for assistance in obtaining the swift justice they deserve. To continue to deny these claims would be a further injustice to these survivors and would only serve to perpetuate the horrible acts that occurred years ago.

In a 5-4 ruling, the Supreme Court in *ALA v. Garamendi* recently struck down a California law aimed at assisting thousands of Holocaust survivors and their families in collecting on millions of dollars of outstanding Holocaust-era insurance policies. The court narrowly rejected the right of states to require insurance companies doing business in their

state to disclose information about Holocaust survivor insurance policies.

The court in *Garamendi* maintained that the president's preference is for Holocaust-era insurance claims to be handled by the International Commission of Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims—an approach that has wholly failed Holocaust victims.

I believe that states should have the authority to assist survivors of the Holocaust to recover benefits from policies lost or stolen before and during these tragic events. Therefore, I am introducing legislation to specifically allow states to collect insurance information for victims of the Holocaust. Unlike similar pieces of legislation that have been introduced, the "Holocaust Victims Insurance Fairness Act" also explicitly expresses Congressional disapproval of any Executive branch policy or agreement that preempts State efforts to collect insurance information for victims of the Holocaust to resolve outstanding claims. Please join me in this effort to finally provide justice to those who have been denied it for so long.

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2003

Mr. HOLT. Speaker, as an educator and avid reader, it's always a special pleasure for me to visit a library or a museum. Libraries and museums safeguard our freedom and keep democracy healthy. They preserve the past and offer brighter futures to all of us, and their resources surely benefit every community member. That is why I was pleased to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 13, the Museum and Library Services Act.

Libraries are often referred to as the "People's University." It is a fitting name. Libraries provide all of us with free access to a fabulous wealth of information. In this increasingly technology-driven society, they speak directly to what we call the Digital Divide. A recent survey by the Department of Commerce found that our libraries are the number one point of access for those who do not have Internet access at home or at work. Today, 90 percent of public libraries have some kind of Internet connection.

Research also shows us that Americans visit libraries 3.5 billion times each year; 1.6 billion items are borrowed annually from public libraries; and research librarians answer 7 million questions every week. Clearly libraries are responding not only to the daunting challenges of the Information Age and to the changing needs of our communities, but they are continuing to serve all of their traditional roles as well.

Libraries are also true community centers. They create environments where students can do their homework, townspeople can gather, families can interact, seniors can learn new skills, and job seekers can find advice. They are forums building partnerships, linking with everyone from garden clubs to Head Start programs to extend their reach throughout our communities.

Throughout our country, libraries serve as the catalyst for economic revitalization, bring-

ing together our communities civic and social leaders. They provide reading material for people of all ages by sending books into maternity wards, setting up reading stations in pediatrician's offices, developing teen centers, and establishing mobile book carts in nursing homes and senior centers.

At my own public library in Princeton, I can see improvements that are traceable to this authorization bill. The library is in the process of constructing a state of the art library security, inventory, and circulation system that will allow library users to automatically check in and check out books. Because of the Museum and Library Services Act, New Jersey residents will gain greater access to the resources available at their local public library.

Similarly, our nation's museums serve as community centers that offer people of every age access to our nation's cultural and natural heritage. Museums' special role in public education fixes on their unique capacity to provide the public with an interactive environment in which to better understand our communities, our nation, and our world.

From local art museums to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., museums are gathering places for people to meet and spend meaningful time with families and friends.

The educational role of museums is at the core of their service to the public. People of all ages and backgrounds come to learn from the collections, exhibits and programs created by museums through their research and scholarship. Museums across the nation provide more than 18 million instructional hours of educational programs, including professional development for our nation's teachers, guided field trips to our students, staff visits to local schools, and traveling exhibits in our communities. Annually, they spend more than \$1 billion to share these activities with us.

Museums also have forged a deeply-rooted connection to the local communities that have created and cherished them. Americans from all income and education ranges visit museums, and each visit provides a wealth of information about our nation's heritage and our opportunities for the future. Across the country, there are 2.3 million museum visits each, adding up to 865 million visits per year. There are more than 15,000 museums in the United States and 90 percent of counties in America have at least one museum—75% of them considered to be small and 43% located in rural areas.

The 12th District of New Jersey is home to the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton, which was recently awarded a Museum Assessment Grant. This grant will provide the museum with technical assistance that will be invaluable in fulfilling its goal to educate the public. The New Jersey State Museum was one of the first state museums founded with this educational mission, and today it is home to a large collection of artifacts detailing archaeological, cultural, and artistic history. For all residents of central New Jersey, this museum offers exciting opportunities to learn about local history, to explore the far reaches of outer space at its planetarium, and to share time with family members at educational workshops. This museum—and the numerous others in the 12th District of New Jersey—enrich the lives of thousands of residents each year.

Mr. Speaker, Carl Rowan, a noted journalist, once said, "The library is the temple of learning, and learning has liberated more people